

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons which follow. Claim 23 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 9, 20 and 24 have been amended. New claims 25-27 have been added. After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-22 and 24-27 are now pending in this application.

Allowable subject matter

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 5, 22 and 23 include allowable subject matter. Independent claims 1, 9, 20 and 24 have been amended to include limitations from allowed claim 23, which has been cancelled.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, 6-18, 20, 21 and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,097,870 to Ranka et al. (hereafter "Ranka"). Insofar as these rejections pertain to the claims as amended, applicants respectfully traverse.

All of the independent claims, 1, 9, 20 and 24, have been amended to include limitations from claim 23, which has been canceled. In view of the indication in the Office Action that claim 23 contains allowable subject matter, applicants submit that all of independent claims 1, 9, 20 and 24 are now allowable. Applicants note that claims 1, 9, 20 and 24 have not been amended to include the limitations of claim 21, from which claim 23 was dependent. Applicants submit, however, that since Ranka does not disclose or suggest the limitations from claim 23 of an instrument or device selected from the group consisting of a confocal scanning microscope, a flow cytometer, an endoscope, a chromatograph and a lithography instrument, the limitations from claim 21 are unnecessary.

For at least the reasons given above, applicants submit that Ranka does not anticipate any of independent claims 1, 9, 20 and 24, or the remaining dependent claims which depend therefrom.

The dependent claims are allowable for the reasons given above with respect to independent claims 1, 9 and 20, and for reciting further patentable features.

New claims 25-27

New claims 25-27 have been added. Support for these new claims can be found in the present specification at least on page 7, line 28 to page 8, line 11. New claims 25-27 ultimately depend from claim 1, and are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1, discussed above.

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper, or if a petition for extension of time is required for timely acceptance of same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 19-0741 for any such fees; and applicant(s) hereby petition for any needed extension of time.

MARKED UP VERSION SHOWING CHANGES MADE

Below are the marked up amended claim(s):

1. (Once Amended) A method for illuminating an object comprising the following steps:
- generating a light beam with a laser,
 - injecting the light beam into a microstructured optical element which spectrally broadens the light of the light beam,
 - shaping the spectrally broadened light beam to form an illumination light beam, and
 - directing the illumination light beam onto the object,

wherein the laser is part of an instrument, and wherein the instrument is an instrument selected from the group consisting of a confocal scanning microscope, a flow cytometer, an endoscope, a chromatograph and a lithography instrument.

9. (Once Amended) An illuminating instrument comprising: a laser that emits a light beam, a microstructured optical element that spectrally broadens the light from the laser and a first optical means for shaping the spectrally broadened light into an illumination light beam,

wherein the instrument is an instrument selected from the group consisting of a confocal scanning microscope, a flow cytometer, an endoscope, a chromatograph and a lithography instrument.

20. (Once Amended) A device for a microscopic inspection comprising: a laser that emits a light beam, a microstructured optical element that spectrally broadens the light from the laser and an optical means for shaping the spectrally broadened light into an illumination light beam,

wherein the device is a device selected from the group consisting of a confocal scanning microscope, a flow cytometer, an endoscope, a chromatograph and a lithography instrument.

24. (Once Amended) An illuminating instrument comprising:

a laser that emits a light beam;

a microstructured optical element that spectrally broadens the light from the laser;

a first optical means for shaping the spectrally broadened light into an illumination light beam; and

a means for adjusting the power or the spectral composition of the spectrally broadened light,

wherein the instrument is an instrument selected from the group consisting of a confocal scanning microscope, a flow cytometer, an endoscope, a chromatograph and a lithography instrument.